

The bottom line is the trade promotion agreement is good for American workers. It is good for American farmers. It is good for American manufacturers. In fact, the agricultural community will tell you that the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement is the best agreement in our Nation's history with any other nation when it comes to access to products grown in the United States and exported to Colombia. The bottom line is it is a good agreement.

Now my friends on the other side of the aisle, the Democrats, say, well, Colombia hasn't done enough. We need to make them do more. There is still some violence there. And until they eliminated it all, well, gee. Well, the bottom line is that Medellin, which was once the murder capital of the world, is now safer than the city of Baltimore. And some people who oppose this agreement say, well, there has been some labor leaders who have experienced violence. But look at the history they have. But as the Washington Post just pointed out, it is safer to be a labor leader in Colombia than it is to be a regular citizen. In fact, the murder rate of labor leaders is lower than the average murder rate of any other citizen in Colombia. Again, President Uribe has made progress.

Let's honor our Nation's best friend in Latin America. Let's honor our most reliable partner. Let's bring to this floor the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. Let's bring it up for a vote, because we know it will pass. Let's get it ratified and move forward so we can grow our economy.

VACATING ORDERING OF YEAS AND NAYS ON H. RES. 1247 AND H. CON. RES. 350

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the ordering of the yeas and nays be vacated on House Resolution 1247 and House Concurrent Resolution 350 to the end that the Chair put the questions de novo.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will now resume on certain motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

COMMENDING THE ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 1199.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1199.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

AN INFORMED CITIZENRY IS THE CORNERSTONE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, an informed citizenry is one of the cornerstones of our American democracy. In order to make the right decisions about our country's policies, Americans must know the facts. That is why every member of the administration and every Member of Congress has the duty to be honest and open with all of us. This is especially true when it comes to decisions about war and about peace, because the lives of our soldiers are actually on the line.

But recent events have reminded us that when it comes to Iraq, we have not always had the information that we need. Earlier this month, the Senate Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report on Iraq that actually proved this. It showed that before the invasion began, the American people were told that there was a strong connection between Iraq and terrorist groups like al Qaeda. But the committee found that there was no conclusive intelligence to support such a claim.

Also, the American people have recently had the chance to read the book by a former White House press secretary who acknowledges that propaganda was used to sell the American people on supporting the invasion of Iraq.

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And this House, this House of Representatives, is pretty familiar with the Pentagon's spin operation to get retired military officers to give us a rose-colored view about the situation in Iraq. The House has voted to stop the Pentagon from continuing such a program, and the Pentagon is expected to respect that ban.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve better. They need to have a true and accurate picture about what is currently happening in Iraq. That's why every Member of this House should be demanding that the administration give Congress the facts about its current status-of-forces negotiations with the Iraqi Government. I have repeat-

edly demanded that the administration share this information with Congress, including the establishment of permanent bases, because there was an alarming report in the press that the United States may actually be planning nearly 60 permanent bases in Iraq, this happening after the House has voted multiple times to prohibit permanent bases in Iraq.

Over the weekend, senior Iraqi leaders called for a complete exit of all U.S. troops, and they called for this at the expiration of the current U.N. mandate which comes this fall. Imagine their opinion of the United States' permanent bases in their country. Sixty permanent bases are absolutely unacceptable. One permanent base is unacceptable.

This House has voted many times, as I said, against the establishment of permanent bases, and the administration should not try to get around that by making fine, legalistic points about what constitutes a "permanent base." In fact, we must apply the duck test. If it looks like a permanent base, if it walks like a permanent base, it is a permanent base.

Because the economy has replaced Iraq as the top news story of the day, some may be lured into thinking that nothing very important is happening in Iraq these days. Well, one important statistic is, if it has not happened today, we are about to report 5,000 of our troops dead, but nothing could be further from the truth about not being important.

While we aren't paying attention, the administration is negotiating status-of-forces negotiations that could make our country a foreign occupying power in the Middle East for years or for even decades to come. What a grave mistake that would be keeping our troops in harm's way and continuing the best recruiting tool that the terrorists could ask for.

Instead of planning for a permanent occupation, the United States needs to follow a very different path. We should redeploy our troops and military contracts. We should give the Iraqi people back their sovereignty. We should help them rebuild their shattered country. We should work with the international community to bring peace and stability to the region.

Mr. Speaker, Congress must demand to know what is being negotiated in the name of the American people. What deals are being cut? What is going on behind closed doors? What exactly is the administration demanding and why? It is time for the American people to have the facts, and it is time to safely and responsibly bring our troops and independent contractors home and to give Iraq back to the Iraqi people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CASITOR). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)